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Sussex County offers tips to weather the storm

Hurricane Irene expected to graze state; could produce 10-foot waves, 10 inches of rain and winds up to 75 mph

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

**1530 Hours, Wednesday
Aug. 24, 2011**

With Hurricane Irene threatening Sussex County and the rest of the mid-Atlantic region, the Sussex County Emergency Operations Center is advising residents and visitors to keep a watchful eye on the tropics and to prepare now, when the weather is calm.

Here are some steps you can take now to make your home and family ready in the event of a tropical storm or hurricane:

- If you live in a flood-prone or other vulnerable area, be prepared to evacuate. Plan your evacuation route now. Emergency managers will notify the public, via the media, of what areas should evacuate and when. In the event you evacuate, take a storm kit with you. Take valuable and/or important papers with you. Secure your house by locking the windows and doors. Turn off all utilities (gas, water, electric, etc.). Notify a family member or someone close to you outside the evacuation area of your destination.
- Secure all outdoor items. Property owners also will need to secure their boats. Area residents should clear rainspouts and gutters and trim any trees that may pose a problem during high winds.
- Have a family disaster kit. This kit should include the following items:
 - A three-day supply of water. This should include at least one gallon of water per person per day;
 - Non-perishable foods and a manual can opener;
 - A change of clothes and shoes for each person;
 - Prescription medicines;
 - A blanket or sleeping bag and pillow for each person;

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- Personal hygiene items;
 - A flashlight and extra batteries for each person;
 - Special needs items, such as formula and diapers for infants, as well as items needed for elderly or disabled family members;
 - A portable radio with extra batteries;
 - Money. During power outages, ATMs will not work;
 - Fuel. Gas pumps are also affected by power outages, so it is a good idea to have fuel in advance.
- In the event of an approaching storm, travel during daylight hours. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO MAKE PLANS OR TO PURCHASE GASOLINE AND SUPPLIES.** When a storm watch is issued, you should monitor the storm on the radio and television. An evacuation could take 24 to 36 hours prior to a storm's onset.
- If ordered to evacuate and seek shelter elsewhere, follow the instructions of local emergency managers on where to go and when. Authorities will announce shelter locations in advance of their opening. Make provisions for your pets, as many shelters will not accept animals.
- If not ordered to evacuate and you decide to take shelter in your home, have your disaster kit ready. Keep your important papers with you or store them in the highest, safest place in your home, and in a waterproof container. Even if you seek shelter in place, you need to secure your home by locking the doors and windows. Turn off all utilities (gas, water, electric, etc.). Monitor the storm by portable radio to keep up with the latest information. Stay indoors. Try to stay in an inside room away from doors and windows.
- Use your phone sparingly. Make only essential calls and keep the calls brief. Report emergencies to 911. When reporting emergencies, identify yourself and your location, making sure to speak clearly and calmly. If you have a mobile telephone, make sure it is charged and ready to use at all times. Remember, however, that cell service may be interrupted during and after the storm.

In the event a hurricane affects our area, expect polluted water, limited communications, no electricity, overflowing or backed-up sewers, undermined foundations, beach erosion and heavy damage to homes and roadways.

Do not re-enter the area until recommended to do so by local authorities. As you re-enter the area, be aware of possible hazards such as downed trees and power lines. Be aware of debris and water on roadways. Upon re-entry, have identification and important legal papers ready to show officials proof of

residency. Continue to use your emergency water supply or boil water until notified that the drinking water is safe. Take precautions to prevent fires.

Sussex County is encouraging those visiting the area to monitor conditions and to use caution if planning a visit to the beach.

The Sussex County EOC encourages residents and visitors to continue monitoring the storm as it moves closer to the coast. For updates, stay tuned to local television and radio stations, the Sussex County EOC Web site at www.sussexcountype.gov/services/storm, and the County's Twitter feed at www.twitter.com/sussex_pio and www.twitter.com/sussexctyde_eoc. The public should also monitor the National Weather Service, at www.nws.noaa.gov/er/phi, for the latest forecast.

For more information, please contact the Sussex County EOC at (302) 855-7801.

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For more information on preparing for hurricane season, including evacuation maps and preparedness brochures, visit www.sussexcountype.gov/services/storm. Another helpful source is the NOAA Hurricane Preparedness Week homepage, www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2.